GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:51
ANSWERED ON:22.11.2000
INDIA`S CANDIDATURE FOR SECURITY COUNCIL
BHAWANA GAWALI (PATIL);PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India`s candidature for a permanent membership in the UN Security Council was raised during the 55th Session of the UN General Assembly in September, 2000; and

(b) if so, the details thereof including the stand taken by USA thereon?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a) & (b) Yes, Sir. Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee reiterated, during the UN Millennium Summit in New York inSeptember 2000, that `India has let it be known for some years that we believe ourselves qualified by objective criteria for responsibilities of permanent membership` and that, `as the world`s largest democracy, enormous potential, a rapidly growing economic power and a major contributor to peacekeeping operations, India has a natural claim to a permanent seat in the Security Council.` At the Plenary of the 55th UN General Assembly, I reaffirmed India`s willingness to take on the responsibilities of permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

The Government has, on various occasions, conveyed its views on Security Council restructuring to the US and to other countries. US officials have, in public statements, acknowledged that India is a very strong contender for Permanent Membership of the Security Council and that its size, its role in the world, its economy, its contribution to UN Peacekeeping, make India a very serious and strong contender.

Brief on Security Council Restructuring

Discussions on Security Council restructuring have been continuing in the UN since 1992. In 1993, the UN General Assembly set up an Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) to discuss the issueIn its last round of deliberations in the year 1999 no consensus could be arrived at on candidates or model for expansion of the Security Council. The report of the OEWG submitted to the 54th UNGA recommends that the body continue with its deliberations and put up its recommendations to the 55th UNGA in September 2000. The OEWG has resumed deliberations in March 2000.

2. In the absence of any agreement on candidates or model for expansion of the Security Council in the OEWG there have been attempts to decide the issue through vote in the General Assembly. A compromise agreed in 53rd UNGA in December 1998 has established two-third majority on voting threshold for adoption of any resolution on Security Council restructuring. Next round of discussions in the General Assembly are scheduled for 15-16th November, 2000.

3. Security Council restructuring has also got linked with the issue of financial reform and veto.

4. Security Council restructuring was also debated in the General Assembly on 17-21 December, 1999.As expected, it was essentially an exercise in reiteration of positions by various countries and reflected the wide differences that still exist on the subject.

Proposals for expansion of permanent members` category:

5. There are broadly 5 main models for expansion of the Security Council:
-Expansion of both categories.
-Creation of rotational membership without expansion of permanent members` category. This was suggested by Italy originally, though they are no longer pushing it for want of adequate support. Italy instead has been talking of NAM fall-back option.
-Induction of Germany and Japan as permanent members with inclusion of developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America on permanent/rotational basis (2+3 formula).
- NAM fall back option for limiting expansion only to non-permanent members category at this stage in case there is no agreementon other categories.

-The OAU has adopted a proposal for two rotating permanent seats for countries in Africa with veto powers.
-The proposal made by UNGA President Razali last year for five new permanent and four new non-permanent members.

Position of Permanent Members:

6. There is disagreement among the P-5 on the question of expansion of the Security Council.Four out of five permanent members (US,UK,France and Russia) have endorsed the candidature of Germany and Japan, thus implicitly supporting expansion of permanent members` category. They have also supported inclusion of developing countries in permanent members` category. The only exception is China. China in a public statement at the UN suggested that expansion should be limited only to non-permanent members` category.

7. The US position of not agreeing to expansion beyond 21 members was one of the main hurdles in the reform process. In April 2000 however US announced her readiness to consider an expanded Security Council of over 21 members.This is seen as an important development which can impart momentum to the process.

NAM:

8. NAM has supported better representation of developing countries in the Security Council, though it has not taken a direct position on expansion of permanent members` category. A special Declaration adopted at the end of XIIth NAM Ministerial Conference at New Delhi in April 1997 stated that partial or selective expansion of the Council to the detriment of developing countries would be unacceptable to the Movement. The CommuniquÃ© adopted by the NAM Ministerial Conference in Cartagena in May 1998 and NAM Durban Summit in September 1998 emphasised that attempts to exclude NAM from any enlargement in the membership of the Council would be unacceptable to the Movement. NAM Ministerial Meeting in Cartagena, in April 2000 reiterated this position.

9. There is also a NAM proposal to limit expansion to only non-permanent members` category for the time being, in case there is no agreement on expansion of other categories. This is only a fall-back option; not an agreed course of action at the moment. In fact, African countries in opting for two permanent seats (on rotational basis) have already departed from this position. NAM has also proposed curtailment of veto powers.

Arab proposal for rotational membership for Asia:

10. An Arab proposal for two rotational seats for Asia was circulated at the UN, even before it was discussed or agreed by the Asian Group. The proposal calls for the two seats to be rotated amongst the countries of the region. The proposal also calls for veto powers for new permanent members. There is no consensus in the Asian Group on even discussing the Arab proposal to which India is opposed.

OAU Position:

11. OAU has demanded two permanent seats to be shared amongst African countries on the basis of rotation with veto powers. Though OAU describes them as permanent seats, since they are to be rotated, this essentially amounts to rotational or semi-permanent membership. No details of the sharing arrangements have been worked out. The OAU has also called for the overall size of the Council to include 26 members.

12. It has been clarified that OAU`s proposal for rotating permanent seats is only for African countries, and this model is not for export to other countries.

13. During the OAU Summit Conference in Burkina Faso in June, 1998, the OAU has maintained above positions. The Summit could not arrive at any agreement about arrangement for sharing the African seat.

India`s claim for permanent membership of the Security Council :-

14. India presented its candidature for permanent membership of the Security Council for the first time in 1994 in the UN General Assembly.
15. At the 52nd UNGA in 1997, the Prime Minister reiterated India`s candidature for permanent membership of the Security Council. He highlighted the strengths of India as the largest democracy in the world, with ancient civilisational values and a world view based on a universalistic inspiration, participative governance, respect for diversity and pluralism, as well as readiness for constructive engagement in the world`s affairs. He added that these strengths would be an asset to the expanded Security Council.The Prime Minister further mentioned that India`s standing as one of the leading economies of the world will be progressively strengthened and India is prepared to bear in full the responsibilities of permanent membership. He also emphasized India`s long standing participation in UN peacekeeping operations.

16. The Prime Minister, in his address to the 53rd UN General Assembly on September 24, 1998, called for the inclusion of developing countries in the Council to protect and promote the interests of the developing world and to make the Council a more effective and democratic instrument. He further stated that India is qualified, has the ability and is prepared to accept the responsibilities of permanent membership. The discussions on equitable representation on and expansion of the Security Council are likely to continue for another year and so far there has been no agreement on issues relating to expansion and reform of the Security Council.

17. In his address to the 54th UN General Assembly on September 22, 1999, EAM said that there are two major problems facing the UN as an institution: Security Council reforms and the UN`s financial crisis.EAM added that the Security Council must be made more representative, with developing countries inducted as members to reflect the changes in the UN membership and today`s political realities. EAM also reiterated that on any objective criteria, India`s credentials for permanent membership are persuasive.

18. During the Millennium Summit in September 2000, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayeereiterated that `India has let it be known for some years that we believe ourselves qualified by objective criteria for responsibilities of permanent membership` and that, `as the world`s largest democracy, enormous potential, a rapidly growing economic power and a major contributor to peacekeeping operations, India has a natural claim to a permanent seat in the Security Council.`External Affairs Minister, Shri Jaswant Singh, at the Plenary of the 55th UN General Assembly reaffirmed India`s willingness to take on the responsibilities of permanent membership of the Security Council.

Developments during the 54th UNGA:-

19. Discussions in the Open Ended Working Group Leading up to the 54th UNGA were unsuccessful in arriving at any consensus on the questions of either criteria or candidatures. Security Council restructuring and expansion was also debated in the General Assembly in December 1999 where again it was apparent that views and positions of various countries on the subject are very wide and divergent.

20. The only point on which there was agreement is that the matter should be discussed further in the OEWG in the year 2000 and recommendations put up again for consideration of the 55th UNGA in September 2000.

Developments during the Millennium Summit and Millennium Assembly:-

21. An overwhelmingly large number of countries (155 out of total UN membership of 189)spoke in favour of reform of the Security Council during the Millennium Summit and the Millennium Assembly. Among these 70 members made specific references to need for expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories and 29 spoke in favour of greater representation of developing countries in the Council. Cambodia, Vietnam and Bhutan have reiterated their support for India`s candidature.

Support for India:-

22. So far, there are nine countries that had expressed support in the UN for India`s candidature.These countries are Mauritius, Bhutan, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Russia, Vietnam, Laos, Cyprus and CambodiaFrance declared its support during our President`s visit to Paris in April, 2000. In addition,several countries that have expressed support during bilateral discussions but have not made public announcements at the UN.